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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: UAE FNC ELECTIONS/RICE VISIT

¶1. Summary: An article in "Al-Khaleej" is sarcastic about Rice's visit stating that the US only serves Israel and thus will never ever be any good to the Arabs. "Al-Bayan" states that the US puts other priorities which do not serve peace in the region. Several articles in "Al-Ittihad" and "Al-Bayan" discuss the Federal National Council elections scheduled for December. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "Any thing left for compromise?", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) wrote in a 10/04 editorial:

"Poor Israel, she is so peaceful, so scared, and so desperate for frequent visits from Secretary Rice so that the secretary can get some encouraging compromises so that Israel can be satisfied with the Arabs and continue in her march to peace which is always interrupted by the Arab terrorists. Poor Israel, she offers compromises, one after the other, yet, the Arabs insist on raping her land, attacking her, and committing massacres continually. The Arabs refuse Israel's offers for peace and security. Israel deserves sympathy and she qualifies for genius record for her record in humanity. This is what seems to be promoted by Rice and the other American delegates in their visits and meetings. They call for what they consider "incentives" for Israel. "Incentives" in the American region-accredited dictionary means political compromises which the Arabs have been offering since the 1970s. America demands, the Arabs answer, and Israel is never satisfied. Washington and its Zionist entity want to exploit the Arabs' bad situation. They want to cancel the Palestinian cause... to uproot the Arab-Zionist struggle in favor of Israel and at the expense of Arabs, Palestine, and the other occupied Arab lands. American wants to market the Zionist terror and considering it as moderate position... And if the Arabs object they will be labeled terrorists. Poor Arabs, if they continue to believe Rice' the other's promises. Poor Arabs if they continue to offer compromises and incentives because Washington's strategy is to deprive the Arabs of everything. Poor Arabs if they continue to believe the Bush administration's promises and lies. Whoever serves Israel and puts their services at her disposal will never ever be any good to the Arabs."

¶3. Under headline "Rice and priorities", Dubai-Based Arabic Daily "Al-Bayan," (circulation 85,000) wrote a 10/04 editorial:

"The drastic internal Palestinian situation comes as an

unprecedented catastrophe. The fact that the US puts other priorities over it does not serve peace or stability in the region. It obviously does not serve the spread moderation so as to effectively thwart extremism".

¶4. A UAE columnist, Mohammed Al-Hammadi, wrote a 10/04 op-ed in Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"... I believe that the phased transition policy adopted by the UAE during the electoral process is important, although it did not meet the high expectations of many people. One of the simplest benefits of a transitional phase is that citizens can test at this stage their rights to see to what extent their situation can change and what their benefits are once they have obtained their transition to democracy. If the results are positive, there is no doubt that their participation in the next elections, which will be general, will be bigger and more serious. If we want to know how much our society would be democratic in the future, we must know how many of the 6689 nominees believe in democracy; the higher the number, the greater the hope to achieve greater democracy. Finally, we have to thank the great efforts exerted by the workers of the Federal National Council in the past few months to turn that dream of elections into reality so as to have this important political process succeed... Because this is the first experience, it is expected that it will be under the microscope. Whatever the level of satisfaction is, we must be convinced that everyone is required to support such an experiment in order to have it successful."

¶5. A UAE columnist, Mohammed Khalfan Al Sowafi, wrote in a 10/04 op-ed in Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic-language daily

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"Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"... Preparations prior to elections can be understood as an open opportunity to establish a base for a strong electoral culture in the UAE and for delivering the required thoughts to the community by an important segment serving the electoral process in the future. Perhaps community involvement or the involvement of a large segment of university students is like building the core infrastructure for Electoral Action. It will allow elite students and others to spearhead electoral work in a better way and will therefore communicate their ideas in this regard to other members of society. They would also work to raise public awareness of electoral work in the next stage. The December elections represent a complete experience of election work.... Some may consider the required participation by youth as insubstantial when faced with the great challenges experienced during this initial experience, specifically in terms of time, but the importance of the contribution of university students in the national action is significant. Instead of merely spreading awareness among members of the electoral community, this experience brings an integration between segments of society; reflecting a large portion of the aspirations and dreams of the youth..."

¶6. Under headline "Diverse Lists", a UAE columnist, Mara'a Al-Helyan, wrote in a 10/04 op-ed in Dubai-Based Arabic Daily "Al-Bayan," (circulation 85,000):

"We talked yesterday about how surprised some people were to see their names on the UAE election lists. Many asked what they should do next. Some started to use their names to maneuver and negotiate. Some started to say that they are free to give their votes to whoever they like. Of course they are free and that is the main principle of democracy. Some are dreaming of a seat in the FNC, and the glory of giving talks to their constituents. Some realize that they need money, lots of it, to publicize their national programs. What is surprising is that the artists found themselves off of the lists. Later, very few names of artists were found in the lists. Then, the singers and modern and classical Arabic poets found out that they were not included in the lists. Just one or two names were there. There were many folklore poets in the lists, however.

The lists include people of all ages, affiliations and academic degrees. The lists did not have tribal conditions. That is why they are so diverse. A friend of mine who has an advance degree in law was in the list. He told me that he honestly did not know what to do next. Initially, I thought of telling him that he needs at least two million AED for the campaign but later I thought I better not tell him this!"

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